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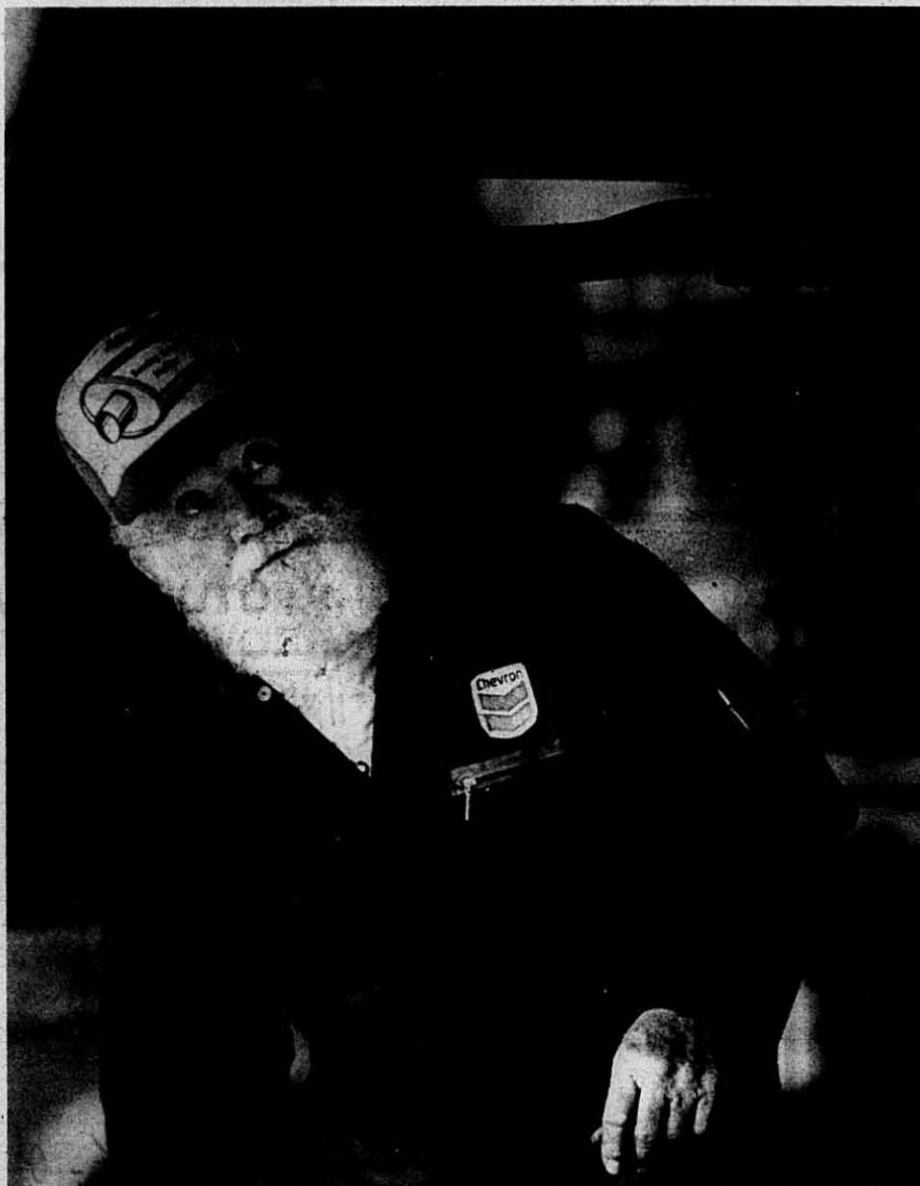
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At home on  
the front porch,  
an essay

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Fraternizing — the  
greek way to party

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# Shipley's

*Gas, oil and a homespun feeling*



# 4 Shipley's: Gas, oil and a homespun feeling

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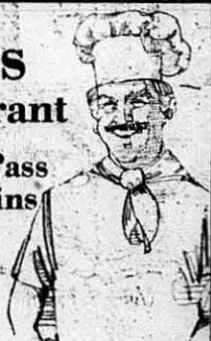
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# Tradition amid noise and chaos

By Robert W. Pillow

We talked in class recently about how farm families in the Midwest sit on the porch when the workday is over.

After supper, the teacher explained, the family moves to the porch to relax and reflect until after nightfall. They talk and drink coffee. Passers-by wave from the road, but rarely stop and talk, because sitting on the porch is for the family.

That talk of porch-sitting made me think of my grandparents, their old home near Auburn, and my parents and their home in Owensboro. My mother, father, siblings and I sit on the porch in the summer, but there are sharp differences between our porch and surroundings and those of my grandparents.

Granma and Granpa Pillow lived on a 26-acre farm five miles west of Auburn. Their porch was 15 feet by 15 feet and made of concrete blocks stacked around a concrete floor. It overlooked a front yard of about half an acre.

From the "concrete porch," as I called it, we could see a woodland surrounded by a wire fence that kept somebody's cows from grazing on the lawn. About 50 feet to the side was a gravel road that ran to U.S. 68-80. Farther down that road, in the opposite direction, lived the Johnsons. They had a basketball court where I practiced shooting air balls.

The front lawn was dotted with small cedars, shrubs and vines. A

"...We can credit ourselves with carrying on the great tradition of porch-sitting, taking time to reflect on the day's events, and stopping to talk to each other."

clarion stood on a tall white post with a cord that was too short for me to reach to ring it.

When we weren't visiting, Granma and Granpa sat on the porch all evening when the moon was out, she told me recently. "It was just so peaceful to sit there," she said. "In canning time, I'd sit on the front porch and string beans."

When we were there, I guess we children worried Granma and Granpa with our questions and constant demands to sit on their laps as they talked to Mom and Dad. Our demands were refused usually because it was too hot, they said.

During his summer leaves from the Air Force, my father brought us to see my grandparents. After supper, my grandparents and parents sat in oak rocking chairs on the porch and talked about nothing very important to kids. My sister, brother and I played in the yard or on the porch.

Once Granpa, Dad and I got the field glasses out to inspect the sign posted on a Tennessee Valley

Authority tower maybe 500 yards away. We decided it was a high-voltage warning sign.

Another time, I played master carpenter with a makeshift tool kit Granpa lent me. I was trying to find how many ways I could bend a nail without driving it through the wood. Granpa borrowed the hammer to kill a bug crawling by.

Some evenings I raced Matchbox cars on the porch, and on a good night we lit candles out in the yard and watched them burn.

While my father was in the Air Force, we visited my grandparents' farm until they sold it and moved to Russellville and, later, Florida.

But our time on the porch didn't end with Granma and Granpa's relocation. My parents, sister and brother and I still spend summer evenings on a porch — in spite of the differences.

We crowd onto a 3-foot by 4-foot concrete stoop that overlooks a 40-by-30 lawn instead of half an acre. From our "porch," we see the street lined with light poles and houses similar to

ours.

We see and hear the cars and trucks on the Green River Parkway and the Wendell H. Ford Expressway a mile away. We watch cars on Epworth Lane dodge little kids riding bicycles or playing football in the middle of the street.

We don't watch cows wandering by; we watch the dogs who chase the kids on bicycles. I cringe every time a bicycle rider gets too close to my car.

Our relaxation is interrupted by a blond kid who likes to ride his Honda dirtbike on the same sidewalk where children play.

The porch is smaller, and the environment differs from my grandparents', but now the conversations are important to me. We talk about the merits of Pink Floyd albums, the mayor's latest blunder, Mom's bowling scores and when I'm finally going to graduate.

I suppose that we can credit ourselves with carrying on the great tradition of porch-sitting, taking time to talk to reflect on the day's events, and stopping to talk to each other.

But I notice that we seem to be one of few families that sit outside on our end of the block. That makes me ask a question of myself — "I wonder what the neighbors think?"

And when I think of the noise and confusion, I find that I don't want to be little again and on my grandparents' sedate porch.

I just want a peaceful view.

# Shipley's



*The homespun style of J.E. Shipley has kept Western students coming in for almost three decades.*

*Story by Michele Wood  
Photos by Todd Buchanan*

**J**E. Shipley is talking.

He's analyzing a recent cold spell as he sweeps a week's worth of muddy shoe prints out of a green Skylark; he's reminiscing about a "good ol' boy from the county seat" — his hometown of Glasgow — as he wipes the dust off the cracked dashboard of a blue Pontiac; or he's talking about Western's latest basketball game as he finishes filling the gas tank of a student's brown Chevette.

Talking is what Shipley does best. It's why people have been coming to the Chevron station at 13th and Center streets for 28 years.

And it's why they keep coming back.

Shipley, the 61-year-old owner of that station, strokes his chin through a curly mass of snow-white whiskers and smiles. "We thank ya," he says, crinkling his bushy eyebrows and grandfatherly winking one of his pale blue eyes. "Take care of yourself."

He pulls a rag from the back pocket of the blue Chevron coveralls that are his uniform every day and finishes wiping out the car. Most of his red-mottled face is hidden by the full beard, sideburns and mustache. And as he leans into the car to tell a joke to an old friend, he could pass for Ernest Hemingway — or Santa Claus.

"Be right with you, Mike," he yells, squawking, as another car pulls into the lot.

Banana trees — given to Shipley as sprouts by a Western student in 1964 — grow from black wooden boxes in the garage; plants hang from a "No Smoking" sign in the garage and the office ceiling. A nativity scene left over from Christmas sits in front of an auto polish can in the window and Chuck Crume's drawing of Big Red decorates one of the walls. Pencil on the drawing is a message from Big Red, Hodgenville junior Mark Greer: "To the No. 1 station, from the No. 1 team, WKU."

Customers and friends drop by the station often; the cubicle office next to the garage takes on the atmosphere of an old-fashioned, country grocery.

David Clark, a Franklin senior, leans back in a well-worn-but-patched-up recliner that sits in a corner of the office. He props his feet on a straight-back chair and reads

the afternoon paper, while Shipley's son, Tooter, fills and services his car. Donald Depp of Glasgow comes in to cash a check. He asks Shipley to fill it out because he just had his eyes dilated at the optometrist's. He stays to talk about the doctor's visit, deer hunting and Shipley's beard.

"The doctor told me, 'Now Ship, your skin's so tender you ought to wear a ski mask,'" Shipley says. "I said, 'how about a beard' and he said 'same difference.'"

"Besides," he adds, grinning, "my grandchildren wanted an old Santa Claus." The three grandchildren smiling from a cluster of pictures on Shipley's seldom-used desk are one of his favorite conversation topics.

The Western students who have wandered in and out of his station for the past 28 years are another.

"You know you're getting old when you had these guys loafing out here while they were going to Western, and now their children are in here," he says. "Now they're going to Western." Only the "better-type" students spend their time at Shipley's, he says. "After you've been here a while, you know people more. We don't get the riffraff like we used to. They just don't come in."

**S**tudents living in the apartments that line 13th and Center streets get to know Shipley quickly.

"He does everything but wash your car," Clark says as he watches the service-station owner check his tires. Other students park their cars in the station lot and seek Shipley's advice on where to get their cars repaired.

"Whenever anything goes wrong, they come to Shipley and he tells them where to go," says Henrietta Gouvas, a College Heights Bookstore employee who has lived next to the station for 33 years. "They trust his judgment."

Earlier that day, a student had poked her head in the office door and timidly asked for "Mr. Shipley." Her van wasn't starting right and a friend had recommended Shipley's advice.

"We don't fix 'em ourselves," he said,

"but we can sure tell them where to go. The only thing wrong with her starter is the cold weather. I just told her that . . . Now, these dealerships — if you speak to one of them, they'll charge you \$5."

He watches Tooter clean a car windshield and grabs a hand broom to help him out. "Now that's one record I hold," he says later — "brushing out cars. I've brushed out more cars than anybody else around. On a fill-up, you automatically get your car brushed out."

**T**hat personal touch is what keeps Shipley and his son in business, he says.

Gas is a little more expensive at Shipley's; the pace a little less hectic. He says he can tell when a customer is growing impatient and thinking about leaving. But most of his customers prefer his comfortable pace, he says.

Opening a self-service lane "never once crossed my mind. I probably couldn't get a customer if I had self-service. That's what they come here for is service."

"When they come here, they're not in no hurry most of the time. The majority of our customers are regulars. They know what to expect when they come in."

The time he spends on each customer depends on "how big a hurry they're in," he says. "If we're not in no hurry, we can take all the time in the world."

Shipley realizes, however, that the lower-priced self-service stations have taken away some of his business. Business has slowed down in the past few years, he says. Five or six guys used to work the station — including Shipley's oldest son, David James — but for the past few years, only Shipley and Tooter have run the business.

"They (regular customers) even tell me that they just come in here every other time," Shipley says. "They buy the cheaper gas one time, then come here for the service the next. Of course it hurts us, but I can't say I blame them."

His gripe with self service is the impersonal reception many attendants give

*Continued on Page 6*



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*'He does  
everything  
but wash your car'*

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Above, Shipley helps Karla White and Wende Goodman fill a spare tire they had rolled from their sorority house to get filled with air.

Left, J.E. Shipley's snow-white beard and moustache give him the appearance of Ernest Hemmingway — or Santa Claus.

# Shipley's Cont.

customers. "They won't hardly even speak to you," Shipley says. "They won't even throw up their hand and wave a . . . and they get about half-irritable if you tell them you want something."

At Shipley's the reception is much warmer, regular customers vow. "You get personal service which you don't get otherwise," says Keith Newman, a Greenville sophomore. "You get good service; and when I'm in a bind and need cash, he lets me cash a check here."

While other businesses shy away from personal checks — especially from students — Shipley says he hasn't "written off a cold check in the last six years."

"You can almost tell by looking at a guy whether he's got money in the

bank," he says.

"How ya doin', Lisa?" he hollers as a high-school student pulls into the lot. "I've known her since she was a little girl," he says.

The children who came to his station with their parents during the past 28 years now drive in their own cars; and the Western students who parked their cars in his lot in the '60s and '70s are gone. The Chevron station at 13th and Center streets, however, stays the same. And the owner of that station plans to keep it that way for "as long as they'll have him."

"Where has all the time gone, Ship?" Mrs. Gouvas asks as Shipley totals her bill. "I don't know," he says, shaking his head. "It just don't seem possible."



Above, Paula Mills consults Shipley about an unusual noise in her van's engine.

Left, Jo Syers, a freshman from Union County, and Amy Wilson, a sophomore from Lexington, push Wilson's car into Shipley's station after they ran out of gas the night before.

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WEEK  
IN  
AND  
WEEK  
OUT

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4th and College
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YOU  
PAY  
LESS

**LIGHT 'N**  
LIVELY  
YOGURT

**3/99¢**

8 oz.

WEEK  
IN  
AND  
WEEK  
OUT



# Fraternizing

## Dressing up a party makes going Greek a rush

Story by Jim Battles

Photos by Todd Buchanan



Spiderman was there.

So was Flash, the Greatest American Hero, the Blues Brothers, Hawkeye Pierce, James Dean and many others.

They were among the heroes that made Alpha Gamma Rho's favorite hero party last week.

By 9 p.m. almost every night many characters swarmed College Street to attend barn, tacky-prep, '50s, M A S H, Hawaiian luau, toga, birthday, red-eye and punk rock parties, thrown by fraternities for spring rush.

The parties are a "blitz on independents to pledge," Mike Stater, Interfraternity Council president, said.

They seem to have at least a few things in common: beer, loud music and lots of people. After that — anything goes.

"Having a theme makes the party," Brad Soblett, a Kappa Alpha rush committee member, said.

"It gives you an opportunity to use your creativity — to see what you can scrounge up out of your closet," Paducah senior Marian Polashock said.



The "Run of the Rodents" at the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity attracted a large gambling crowd.

## Run of the Rodents

In Kentucky, bluegrass flourishes and the horses race in the spring.

Obviously, someone didn't tell the Pikes.

They decided to have their own race — in January. Not with horses but with mice.

Frat rats, you might call them.

The Pi Kappa Alpha house had all the trappings of Churchill Downs under one roof for their "Run of the Rodents" party. At the door, visitors received play money to bet on their favorite mouse: Speedy Green, Mickey Orange, Purple Passion, Red Ranger, Black Magic or Pink Lady. A bottle of Jack Daniel's whiskey awaited the gambler with the biggest haul.

Downstairs, the track — a modified dice table — was lined with newspaper smeared with a trail of cheese to encourage the mice to finish the race.

"Follow the American cheese road," Chris Wenzler, the Barker and announcer, told the mice.

Wenzler, a sophomore from Germantown, Tenn., added to the carnival atmosphere of the party. He played the roles of proud mouse owner, bookie and track com-

menter.

A girl walked up, wanting to see a mouse before she bet on it. Assuming the owner's role, he picked up a box — the mouse's "stable" — and showed her Black Magic, a black and white mouse with a black stripe painted on its tail.

"Maybe he's got the winner in him," Wenzler boasted to the girl.

Gary Bates, Pike rush chairman, said the mice were on loan from local petshops.

Upstairs, the atmosphere was more like the infield of the Kentucky Derby. Dozens of people shook the floor as they danced. The floor buckled from the weight, shaking the pipes in the basement and dripping on the bettors.

Some people dressed specially for the event.

Sandy Pierce, a Leitchfield sophomore, wore red and white jockey silks and a tag that read, "I'm a jockey: how about a ride?"

She often pointed out that she was dressed exactly like the jockey figure in the living room of the house. She'd tap someone on the shoulder and pose the same way.

Another girl, Franklin sophomore

Lisa Griffin, had a "racing form" tucked under her arm. She sported black pants and blouse with a gray blazer, pearls and sunglasses, complete with field glasses to see the race.

Others wore Kentucky Derby T-shirts and buttons.

Between races the group moved up the stairs like a tide. Directly after a race, a smaller wave of people moved to the downstairs bar, which had been converted into betting windows.

"I did better at Keeneland," said Shepherdsville junior T.J. Stamps, tearing up his ticket.

Others in the crowd shouted, "Red Ranger! Red Ranger!" — the mouse that won.

"I just won \$2,000," someone yelled.

Meanwhile, Wenzler could be heard setting up the fifth race — the Derby.

"That's the strongest pony we got. I bet he'll win the Derby," he said from his post at the track.

The Derby was set. A drink spilled on the table and

someone yelled, "It's a wet track — we got to change our bets!"

Wenzler called, "Post time!" The betting windows closed.

The mice were placed in paper cups attached to a stick. When the cups were tipped over, the race was on.

The mice worked their way along the track, smelling the cheese. Wenzler followed them with a piece of cardboard to keep them from running back.

Cheers grew louder as the mice reached the first turn.

"There's so many people, I can't see the damn rats," a voice boomed from the crowd.

By this time the cheers were so loud that Wenzler couldn't be heard.

The mice rounded the last turn and headed for the toilet-paper finish line.

"Lucky Lady!" people shouted as they headed for the pay-off windows.

The bottle of Jack Daniel's was claimed by several fraternity members who pooled their winnings.

\$201 in play money. A few of the members kept the winning mouse.



# Fraternizing Cont.

## 'We want scum'

People came to the Sigma Phi Epsilon house wearing Saran Wrap, eyeshadow and glitter.

A deerskin hung from Greg Stickler's neck and the back of the Louisville senior's T-shirt read, "I ate Bambi." Freshmen Missy Pruett of Newbergh, Ind., and Michelle McLane of Elizabethtown, wore plastic garbage bags as dresses.

Downstairs, the eager crowd yelled, "We want scum!" We want scum!"

So the band, Dash Riprock and the Scum of the Earth, obliged by playing the Eagles hit, "Greets Don't Want No Freaks."

"There was beer all over the dance floor," the song went and it was soon true at the Sig Ep's fifth semi-annual Punk Rock Party. The basement of the fraternity house resembled a West Coast rock club. Only a string separated the band from the rowdy crowd.

Drexell Brewer, a Madisonville freshman, played a kazoo in the crowd while the band played its rendition of Bruce Springsteen's "Cadillac Ranch." The partiers sang along as the band played hits by the

Beatles and Rolling Stones.

Later a fiddler and saxophonist joined the band to play "There ain't nobody here but us chickens."

Beer was slung around the room as the dancing became wilder and the crowd grew sweatier. Beer hit the ceiling and dripped on the dancers.

People had decorated their hair with paint to give the punk rock effect and one student had painted blood marks, resembling a cat's whiskers, across his face. He had been clawed by a pussy cat, he said. Another man frightened girls with a rubber snake and others drank beer from breast shaped mugs.

The punk rock party draws a larger crowd than any of the other Sig Ep parties, according to Tom Swamber who was working the door, but this one wasn't as crowded as past parties because it was on a Friday night.

Mitch Moore douses Greg Stickler with beer at Sigma Phi Epsilon's "Punk Rock" party. The party featured a live band and bizarre costumes.



## Slumber Party

Kappa Alpha fraternity, meanwhile, was getting ready for bed.

"It's bedtime at the KA house," the sign read as visitors entered the door — a pajama party.

Larry Hicks, a Bowling Green senior, wore a wig with curlers and a pink flannel nightgown, a blue bathrobe, and slippers. He said he borrowed the outfit from his mother.

But Hick's beard didn't seem to coordinate with his outfit.

"It's something to look at during the parties," Hicks said.

He wasn't the only one who looked ready for bed.

Some girls wore night-shirts: some long, others a little more revealing.

Dan Cooksey, a Bowling Green senior, wore one-piece long johns with a trap door in the back. The trap was shut, but he leaned against the wall

over a heating register to get warm.

In his arms, he held a yellow stuffed bear named Yellow. He said it was his virility god.

"I'm hoping it works tonight," he said.

By 10:30 p.m., about 250 people were already there.

Around the corner, dozens of paper stars hung from the ceiling just low enough to brush the tops of heads.

On the wall of the crowded barroom, black lights illuminated a fluorescent green and orange painting that supposedly represented a dream.

On the opposite wall, behind the bar, a large Confederate flag glowed along with the dream.

It may have been bedtime at the KA house, but no one could really sleep. The beds in one room were piled high with the dozens of coats.

After all, it was a cold night.



Jeff Stephenson, a Shepherdsville sophomore, sports his favorite hat at Kappa Alpha's "Mad Hatter" party. The KA's parties varied in theme from a pajama party to a "Tacky Prep" party.